M&O
Serials
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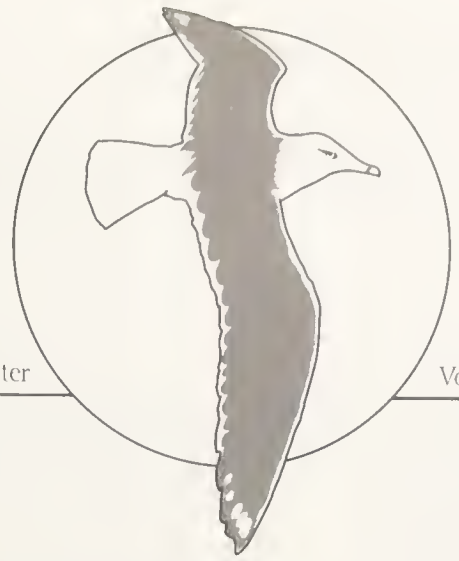
The Gull



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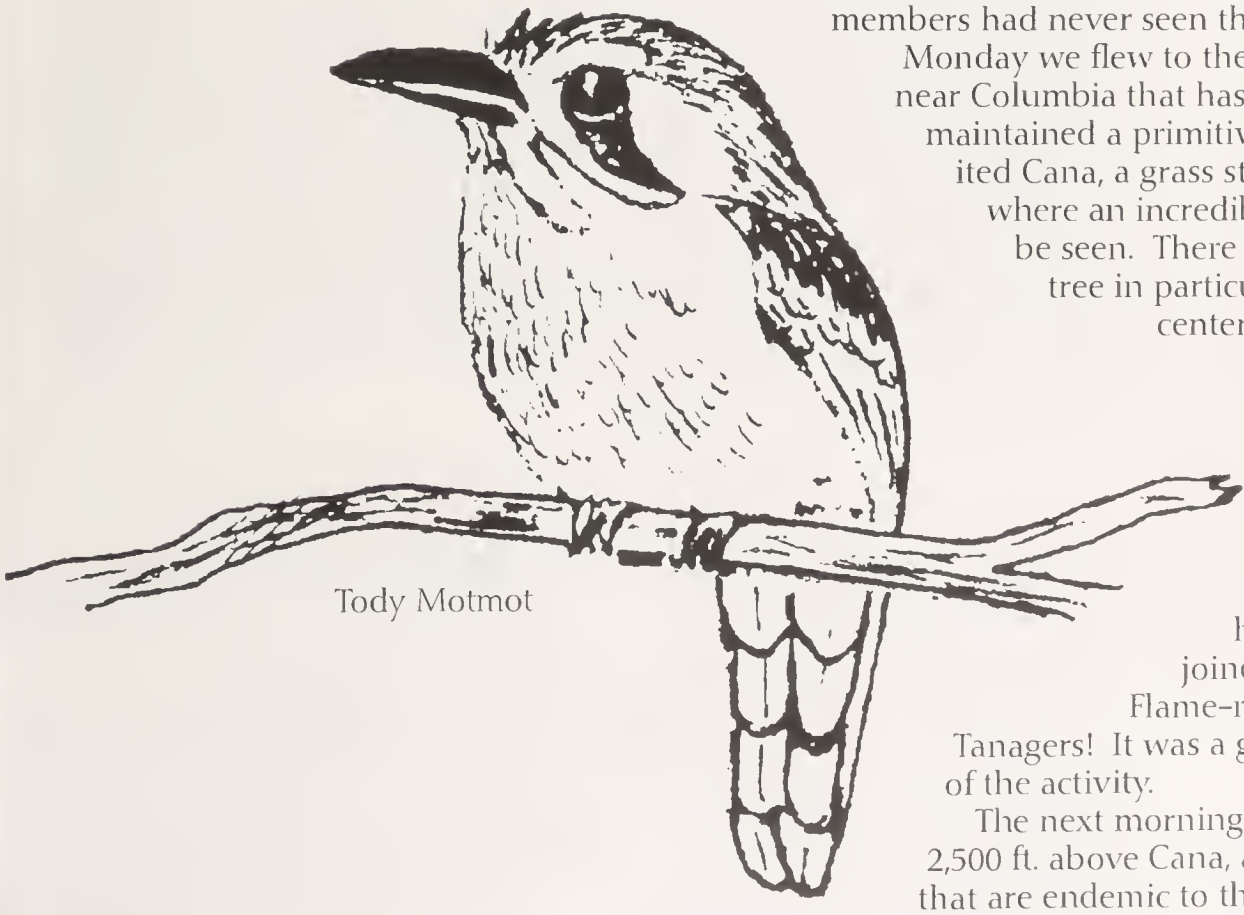
Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter Volume 79, No. 6 June 1997

Adventures in Panama

by Miles McKey

Our trip began on Sunday, Feb. 23, at the Pipeline Rd., one of the most famous spots in the Canal Zone for birding. We were accompanied by our guide, Loyda Sanchez, and a dozen members from the Panama Audubon Society (PAS). This was a special opportunity to get to know them and benefit from their knowledge of the area. One person, for example, found a swarm of army ants for us, giving us the opportunity to see a number of birds that specialize in accompanying swarms to feed on the insects flushed from their path. Even some PAS members had never seen this phenomenon before!

Monday we flew to the Darien, a national park near Columbia that has no roads and so has maintained a primitive condition. There we visited Cana, a grass strip with a basic lodge, where an incredible variety of birds could be seen. There was one large flowering tree in particular that seemed to be the center of activity. It served as a home to Yellow-billed Caciques as well as Cinereous, White-winged, and Colored Bacards. It was also the "town center" for several species of flycatchers and hummingbirds, which were joined by Crimson-backed, Flame-rumped, and Swallow Tanagers! It was a great tree to watch with all of the activity.



Tody Motmot

The next morning we hiked to Cerro Pirre, 2,500 ft. above Cana, again identifying species that are endemic to that area or difficult to see outside the Darien. A Tody Motmot flew out of the foliage in an attempt to cross the trail and struck a member in the chest! It then sat for 10 minutes

Continued on page 8

Field Trips Calendar

GGAS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

Saturday, June 7
Hayward Regional Shoreline

Meet at 9 a.m. at the visitor center on Breakwater Avenue for this half-day trip. Take I-880 to Hwy. 92 (Hayward/San Mateo Bridge exit). Exit at Clawiter, cross Clawiter onto Breakwater Court. Turn left onto Breakwater Ave. There will be breeding swallows, baby stilts, and avocets. Beginners welcome. (Visitor center opens at 10:00. No other facilities.) Leader: Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001.

Wednesday June 11 Mini-Trip To Redwoods Regional Park

Meet in the park at 9:30 a.m. Take the Warren Freeway (Hwy. 13), exit onto Redwood Road, and proceed east about 3 miles to Redwood Gate, southern entrance to the park. Meet just inside the small parking lot on the left. We should see Black-headed Grosbeak, Swainson's Thrush, Bullock's Oriole, and Solitary, Hutton's, and Warbling Vireos. Bring lunch. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman. $(*)

Saturday-Sunday, June 14-15
Yuba Pass

On Saturday meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Yuba Pass summit parking area (Hwy. 49) 19 miles east of Sierra City. Take I-80 to Truckee, go north on Hwy. 89 to Sierraville and take Hwy. 49 west to Yuba Summit. (Or, take Hwy. 49 northeast from Auburn for a slower but more scenic route.) We will bird the mountain areas for summer residents including Dippers, flycatchers, warblers, and Calliope Hummingbirds. On Sunday meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 49 and 89 (by the sawmill) about one mile north of Sattley. We will caravan to Sierra Valley looking for birds of the eastern Sierra, including White-faced Ibis, Sandhill Cranes, Sage Thrashers, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Camping is available at the following U.S. Forest Service campgrounds of Hwy. 49: Wild Plum (elev. 3300 ft.) 2 mi. east of Sierra City, and Chapman Creek (elev. 5800 ft.) 8 mi. east of Sierra City. Lodging is available in Sierra City: Sierra Chalet (916) 862-1110, Buttes Motel (916) 862-1170, Herrington's Sierra Pines (916) 862-1151, Basset Station Motel (916) 862-1297, Sierra Buttes Inn Motel (916) 862-1191 and Yuba River Inn (916) 862-1122. Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. (*)

Friday-Sunday, June 27-29
Lassen Volcanic National Park

Join the Murphy family on the annual GGAS family camping excursion to Lassen. In past years we have seen Willow, Hammond's, and Dusky Flycatchers, Black Swift, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird, Calliope Hummingbird, Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, and most of the warblers and finches that breed in the mountains.

The more serious birders will meet at the Manzanita Lake Campgrounds store at 6:30 a.m. on Friday and again on Sunday. We will bird around the lake for 2-3 hours, return to camp for breakfast, then rendezvous again at the store at 10:30 a.m. for another outing. The Friday outing will be a leisurely hike of about 3 miles on one of Lassen's beautiful trails. We may climb as much as 700 ft. Wear sturdy shoes and bring lunch and liquids. Suntan lotion, a hat, mosquito repellent, and warm clothing may also be necessary.

Saturday is a special day. We will meet by the camp store at 7:30 a.m. and caravan north to Burney Falls, Fall River Valley, and Baum Lake. Bring lunch and liquids. This all-day excursion of about 100 miles will include a 2- or 3-hour swim at Lake Britton while watching for Bald Eagles. (If you forget your swimsuit, the trails at Burney Park offer a wonderful diversion, and fishermen can try their luck in some of northern California's finest trout streams.) Since this is a long and tiring day, we suggest a get-together for dinner at a nearby restaurant instead of returning to the campstove. Stop at our campsite for further information. We will have a campfire every evening beginning at 8 p.m. Bring your own chair (and a cup of wine if you choose). We will provide hot water for tea or coffee. Check the campground bulletin boards or the office at Hat Creek Resort for our poster, campsite number, and any last-minute changes in the schedule.

For the Sunday outing we will meet at 10:30 a.m. to drive through the park, making frequent stops for birding. We should reach the south entrance around 1 p.m., depending upon how long we play in the snow at the summit. For this final event, bring warm gloves, a

Hey Kids!

Do you have questions about birds, or bird jokes you would like to share? How about pictures of birds you have drawn? Include your name and age and send submissions to:

Gull Kids' Page
c/o Louise Harm
GGAS, 2530 San Pablo Ave. Ste. G, Berkeley, CA 94702

Drawings need to be 81/2 x 11; black on white.

PHOTO BY JOHN GIBBONS

The Bird's Eye View

(Look here for birds that you can watch in your own back yard!)

Gulls! We see gulls everywhere in the Bay Area because they have adapted well to our urban habitat. The Western Gull is one of many different species that live in the Bay Area. Western Gull adults have white bodies and dark gray wings, with pink legs and feet and yellow beaks. Juveniles are brown birds with brown legs and feet. Gull experts like to tell how old an immature gull is by how much of its plumage has changed from brown to gray and white. It takes a Western Gull about four years to become a full adult. The next time you look at a gull, see if you can tell if it is an immature, a full adult, or somewhere in between. You can use your household field guide to help you.

Ask a Bird-Brain!

Why do birds fly south for the winter?

Many birds migrate. This means they fly at a particular time of the year to live in a different part of the world. Many North American migratory birds spend the summer in northern Canada and fly south to countries near the equator for the winter. Northern Canada may seem like a cold, barren place, but in the summer there is plenty of food for birds to eat and space where they can live. However, as the seasons change and the weather grows cold, the birds must fly south to survive. Many diverse animals live near the equator, taking advantage of the warm climate. In fact, it can be so crowded that there is not always enough space and food for all the animals that live there. Birds that migrate can take advantage of both locations. They have more space and food during the summer in the North and a warm climate near the equator during the winter. Some birds even spend half the year in northern Canada, then migrate all the way to the southern tip of South America for the other half of the year. Now there is a long flight!

What Do You Think of Our New Kids' Page?

Did you enjoy it? Did your children enjoy it? We would really appreciate your feedback, so why don't you drop us a line at the office and give us your two cents worth?.

Thanks!

Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue
Suite G
Berkeley, California 94702

plastic trash bag for a mini-toboggan, and a camera.

From the Bay Area, drive north on I-5 to its junction with Hwy. 44 in Redding. Go east on Hwy 44 to the northwest entrance of Lassen. Camping facilities are available at Manzanita Lake. Lodging is available about 15 miles north of the park at Hat Creek Resort, Old Station (916) 335-7121. Other information can be obtained from the park headquarters, Mineral, CA 96063. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy (415) 564-0074. $(*)

Saturday–Sunday, July 26–27 Yosemite Alpine Ecology

On Saturday (depending on snow conditions) we plan to climb Mt. Hoffman, which is in the geographic center of Yosemite, with beautiful views in all directions. The total round-trip hike will be around 6 miles, with 2,000 foot approximate elevation gain. On the way we will pass May Lake, which is at the base of the peak. On Sunday we will have a shorter hike, returning to our cars by 3:00 p.m.

Due to its popularity, this trip will be by reservation only, and the numbers participating will be strictly limited. If you are interested, please call George Peyton as soon as possible.

This is not primarily a birding trip, but will emphasize general alpine ecology. All participants should be in good physical condition, with reasonable experience in hiking and climbing at elevations of 8,000 to 11,000 feet. Each day you should bring lunch, ample fluids, hat, water repellent jacket, sun lotion, mosquito repellent, and good walking shoes or boots with treaded soles (no smooth-soled tennis or other shoes, please). We will possibly be traversing snow fields after the heavy winter snows in the Sierra.

County and Forest Service campgrounds are located between Tioga Pass and Lee Vining off Hwy. 120 (4 to 6 miles west of Hwy. 395), as well as Tuolumne Meadows Campground in Yosemite. Motels in Lee Vining include Best Western Lakeview Lodge (619/647-6543), Gateway Motel (619/647-6767), and Murphy's Motel (619/647-6316). For trip reservations and meeting details call - Leader: George Peyton (510) 444-3131 weekdays. $ (*).

Thursday–Sunday, August 7–10 Backpacking Trip In Lassen Volcanic National Park

We will backpack in three miles to Snag Lake and spend three nights in primitive camping by a stream near a large meadow. We should see flocks of mixed warblers and other songbirds that summer in Lassen, plus resident birds of the mountains, Bald Eagles, and perhaps some migrating shorebirds. We will be above 6,000 ft elevation in beautiful country! To avoid impact in fragile habitat, this trip is limited to 12 people. Everyone will be responsible for his/her own gear and food, although some cooperative or shared meals may be arranged. Leaders: David Rice and Robin Pulich. For details call David Rice at (510) 527-7210. $(*)

Trips marked with a ($) go to parks or other sites that require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked with a (*). Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LEADING A TRIP, call Lillian Fujii (510) 236-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.

An Invitation to the Desert

Cadillac Desert: Water and the Transformation of Nature is a four-part documentary series coming to public television on June 24. Based on Mark Reisner's book of the same title, the series looks at the epic struggle for water in the American West. With 40,000 dams and 50,000 miles of aqueducts, our land has been changed completely and forever, making it wet where it was dry, and dry where it was wet. *Cadillac Desert* chronicles the growth of a thriving civilization in a great American desert, and the legacy of profound risk it has created at home and abroad.

On June 12th, there will be a special screening and reception which will feature talks by the filmmakers and sponsor groups. It is hosted by KQED TV and the California Academy of Sciences, and sponsored by the Golden Gate Audubon Society, the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Bay Institute, the Film Arts Foundation, and Friends of the River. Every one is invited to attend. See you there!

Cadillac Desert Preview Screening & Filmmaker's Reception

Thursday June 12th

Morrison Auditorium, California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park

7:00 p.m.

Suggested donation: $6.00 per person

Call (415) 750-7128 for reservations by June 9th

Clean-up for a Good Cause

On the morning of Saturday, April 19, 12 GGAS members and friends converged on Albany Beach, armed with plastic bags and binoculars. The binoculars were for, well–you know birders never go outside without binoculars–and the plastic trash bags were for cleaning up the beach in honor of Earth Day. The birding was only so-so, but the beach, a favorite of fishing enthusiasts and dog exercisers, was a veritable trash bonanza.

We averaged about 30 pounds of trash per person, and it came in all shapes and sizes. Some of the most interesting things found were a balloon and an old shoe, and the persistence of plastic and styrofoam in the environment was vividly illustrated, because those two materials made up a large percentage of what was collected.

The conservation committee organized the event, coordinating with East Bay Regional Parks and providing refreshments. Thanks go to Carolyn Kolka and Arthur Feinstein for making it happen, as well as Mary Schaefer, Geraldine Arko, Dorothy Frantz, Rebecca Freed, Ann Marie Bratten, Jody Hansell, Jeanette Shields, Henrietta Wiley, Mary Germundson, and Eve and her friend from Albany.

Sorry I'm Late

Unfortunately, due to misunderstandings and mailing, the bird count species list was not published with its article in the March *Gull*. We hope that its delay has not lessened your interest in these fine results!

1996 Oakland Christmas Bird Count

9 Red-throated Loon
2 Pacific Loon
42 Common Loon
1 loon, sp
210 Pied-billed Grebe
281 Horned Grebe
1 Red-necked Grebe
38 Eared Grebe
383 Western Grebe
50 Clark's Grebe
143 Aechmophorus sp
2 Am. White Pelican
103 Brown Pelican
936 Double-crested Cormorant
16 Brandt's Cormorant
5 Pelagic Cormorant
45 Great Blue Heron (blue form)
55 Great Egret
143 Snowy Egret
1 Cattle Egret
3 Green Heron
89 Black-crowned Night-Heron
5 Greater White-fronted Goose
1 Ross' Goose
1 (Black) Brant
1221 Canada Goose
3 Canada Goose (small forms)
3 Wood Duck
1 Green-winged Teal (Eur.)
125 Green-winged Teal (Am.)
1425 Mallard
80 N. Pintail
5 Blue-winged Teal
52 Cinnamon Teal
255 N. Shoveler
141 Gadwall
1 Eur. Wigeon
654 Am. Wigeon
951 Canvasback
93 Redhead
178 Ring-necked Duck
10818 Greater Scaup
2431 Lesser Scaup
7644 scaup sp
6103 Surf Scoter
19 White-winged Scoter
769 Common Goldeneye
25 Barrow's Goldeneye
1 goldeneye sp
1693 Bufflehead
11 Hooded Merganser
77 Common Merganser
52 Red-breasted Merganser
3200 Ruddy Duck
400 duck sp
242 Turkey Vulture
12 Osprey
11 White-tailed Kite
1 Bald Eagle
11 N. Harrier
28 Sharp-shinned Hawk
16 Cooper's Hawk
4 Accipiter sp
32 Red-shouldered Hawk
169 Red-tailed Hawk
1 Buteo sp
1 adult(s)
54 Am. Kestrel
6 Merlin
6 Peregrine Falcon
54 California Quail
22 Clapper Rail
5 Virginia Rail
11 Sora
2844 Am. Coot
1215 Black-bellied Plover
134 Semipalmated Plover
127 Killdeer
1 Black Oystercatcher
213 Black-necked Stilt
1662 Am. Avocet
60 Greater Yellowlegs
1023 Willet
7 Spotted Sandpiper
21 Whimbrel
86 Long-billed Curlew
932 Marbled Godwit
6 Ruddy Turnstone
28 Black Turnstone
636 Sanderling
3747 W. Sandpiper
331 Least Sandpiper
2325 Dunlin
884 peep sp
115 Short-billed Dowitcher
48 Long-billed Dowitcher
573 dowitcher sp
1 Common Snipe
2 Bonaparte's Gull
3288 Mew Gull
2197 Ring-billed Gull
2084 California Gull
97 Herring Gull
8 Thayer's Gull
957 W. Gull
9 W. X Glaucous-winged Gull
427 Glaucous-winged Gull
2936 gull sp
137 Forster's Tern
2179 Rock Dove
481 Band-tailed Pigeon
1045 Mourning Dove
CW Barn Owl
4 W. Screech-Owl
40 Great Horned Owl
2 Burrowing Owl
3 N. Saw-whet Owl
2 White-throated Swift
315 Anna's Hummingbird
2 Selasphorus sp
22 Belted Kingfisher
6 Acorn Woodpecker
10 Red-breasted Sapsucker
53 Nuttall's Woodpecker
14 Downy Woodpecker
9 Hairy Woodpecker
2 N. (Yellow-shafted) Flicker
217 N. (Red-shafted) Flicker
25 N. Flicker
1 N. (Yel-sh. X Red-sh.) Flicker
102 Black Phoebe
15 Say's Phoebe
1 Horned Lark
277 Steller's Jay
479 Western Scrub-jay
119 Am. Crow
54 Common Raven
661 Chestnut-backed Chickadee
63 Plain Titmouse
1264 Bushtit
108 Red-breasted Nuthatch
18 White-breasted Nuthatch
19 Pygmy Nuthatch
42 Brown Creeper
1 Rock Wren
57 Bewick's Wren
CW House Wren
12 Winter Wren
4 Marsh Wren
235 Golden-crowned Kinglet
618 Ruby-crowned Kinglet
84 W. Bluebird
116 Hermit Thrush
12,066 Am. Robin
163 Varied Thrush
129 Wrentit
48 N. Mockingbird
12 California Thrasher
10 Am. Pipit
1000 Cedar Waxwing
5 Loggerhead Shrike
5447 Eur. Starling
26 Hutton's Vireo
7 Orange-crowned Warbler
1 Yellow Warbler
75 Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler
493 Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler
494 Yellow-rumped Warbler
59 Townsend's Warbler
7 Common Yellowthroat
1 W. Tanager
112 Spotted Towhee
622 California Towhee
17 Rufous-crowned Sparrow
39 Savannah Sparrow
95 Fox Sparrow
174 Song Sparrow
5 Lincoln's Sparrow
5 White-throated Sparrow
1036 Golden-crowned Sparrow
1118 White-crowned Sparrow
6 Dark-eyed (Slate-col.) Junco
1808 Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco
912 Red-winged Blackbird
86 Tricolored Blackbird
534 W. Meadowlark
1254 Brewer's Blackbird
65 Brown-headed Cowbird
170 blackbird sp
145 Purple Finch
3 Cassin's Finch
744 House Finch
2 Red Crossbill
148 Pine Siskin
453 Lesser Goldfinch
221 Am. Goldfinch
230 House Sparrow

109,670 Individuals
173 Species
5 Additional Forms
1 Hybrids
1 Intergrades
173 Cumulative Species
152 Observers in the field
47 Parties
245.3 Hours on foot
29.25 Hours by car
6 Hours by boat
1.5 Hours by canoe
282.05 Total Party Hours
158.4 Miles on foot
390.1 Miles by car
28 Miles by boat
2 Miles by canoe
578.5 Total Party Miles
34.5 Feeder Hours
15.25 Owling Hours
25.85 Owling Miles
700 Starting Time
1715 Ending Time

CW = species seen during count week but not count day

Conservation News and Thoughts

bby Arthur Feinstein and Carolyn Kolka

Migratory Bird Treaty Act Under Attack

The 1916 Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), created between the U.S A and Canada (later to be augmented by the addition of Mexico, Russia, and Japan), essentially put all migratory birds under federal protection. It requires hunting permits for game birds, protects all nesting migratory birds, and forbids the "taking", i.e. the killing, of all migratory birds. Thus the MBTA is responsible for the survival of many of our bird species.

The Clinton Administration is seeking to undermine this treaty by declaring that federal agency actions are exempt from the terms of the treaty. While it is unclear what impact this change will have, it's likely to be a bad one for the birds. Already environmentalists have had to go to federal court on three separate occasions, and in each case the courts have ruled that the MBTA does, indeed, apply to federal agencies.

Despite these rulings, the Clinton Administration is still attempting to remove MBTA protections from federal actions, and it is doing this without any public notice. National Audubon Society President John Flicker has said of these actions, "This is a stunning development, and it is completely unjustified. To alter such a fundamental regime without any public comment is completely unjustified."

Please contact President Clinton and ask him to reverse his position on the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Tell him that federal agencies should be bound by the MBTA and that any alteration to that principle should require public notice and hearings.

Please write to:
President William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

As usual, if you have any questions please feel free to call Arthur Feinstein at the GGAS office at 510-843-2222. Thanks.

Family Nature Walk

Join us on a family-oriented nature walk along Crab Cove on Sunday, June 22nd (please note date change). We will meet at the Crab Cove Nature Center at 10:00 a.m., then walk a section of the cove towards the marina. Along the way, we will talk about the various birds we see, as well as learn how important a habitat the bay is to other plants and animals that live here. Then test your family's knowledge on a short scavenger hunt for the walk back! We encourage families with children up to age 10 to come. Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy after the walk. For directions to Crab Cove, questions, or information about Education Committee meetings, call Louise Harm (510) 845-2482.

Good Bye and Thanks To Good Friends

All too often we forget to give credit and thanks to the people who make Golden Gate Audubon work. This year we are seeing two of our greatest assets leave the Board.

Steve Margolin, past-President and then Finance Chair, was someone we all turned to when a question arose. Any question, any issue. Steve's knowledge and perception on issues ranging from conservation to finance was an invaluable resource.

Steve took us into the computer world for our bookkeeping and was instrumental in our developing an environmentally sound investment policy for the bequests and donations that make our GGAS efforts possible.

When told that he and his wife Rene were moving on to Paradise, California (or close to it) we all looked at each other and said, "What will we do now?"

Obviously we'll carry on, but it will be all the more difficult for Steve's leaving. Happily, Steve has said he will still answer our phone calls and give us advice, but it won't be the same as having him at our Board meetings dispensing his wisdom and reassurance.

This year we are also losing West Bay Director Donna Lion. Donna's graphic and artistic talents have been an indispensable aid to our chapter. From designing our business cards to creating the more publicly visible GGAS hats, decals, and lapel pins (with the help of others on our Products Committee), Donna has been a wonderful contributor to GGAS. Donna, too, has said she'll stay in touch and be available as a resource to GGAS. We'll count on that and we're sure you'll all be seeing more of her work in the future.

Our sincere and heartfelt thanks to both Steve and Donna and to all the other volunteers who spend countless hours making GGAS the great Audubon chapter that it is.

Observations

by Hugh Cotter

March 28 to April 28

The monthly *Observation* column is generated from reports made to the Northern California Bird Box and Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert (MPRBA) or to the author. Some sightings are unconfirmed, and numbers of birds are often best regarded as estimates or "best guesses". In general, birds in boldface are very rare in our region, geographically or seasonally. Many of these are currently reviewed by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC). Observers are encouraged to provide written and/or photographic documentation to the CBRC, c/o Michael Patten, P.O. Box 51959, Riverside, CA 92517-2959 for any species currently on the review list. A list of review species can also be obtained from the CBRC secretary at the address above.
This report is made possible by all the observers who contributed their sightings to the Northern California Bird Box and MPRBA.
If anybody has photos of birds reported in this column and would like us to post them on our web site, we would be very appreciative. Please feel free to contact me to discuss.
Abbreviations for Observers: FB, Florence Bennett; KB, Ken Burton; LC, Luke Cole; RC, Rigdon Currie; MD, Mike Danzenbaker; GD, Gary Deighi; SG, Steve Glover; MH, Marie Hayman; AH, Alan Hopkins; BM, Bert McKee; PJM, Peter Metropolus; BP, Benjamin Parmeter; HR, Harold Reeves; SR, Steve Rottenborn; PS, Paul Sarassini; LS, Larry Speir; ST, Scott Terrill; RST, Ron Thorn; DW, Denise White; AW, Alan White; NW, Nick Whelan.
Abbreviations for counties: COL, Colusa; CC, Contra Costa; MAD, Madera; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MON, Mono; SF, San Francisco; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SON, Sonoma; STA, Stanislaus, TUO, Tuolumme; YOL, Yolo.

Loons to Puffins

An exciting start to this month's Observations is a report of an alternate-plumaged **Yellow-billed Loon**, seen flying north past Pigeon Point, SM, on Apr 24 (BM). Highlights from a Pelagic trip to the Cordell Banks, SON, on Apr 16 (DN), included one Laysan and 45 Black-footed Albatross. The overwintering Laysan Albatross at Point Arena, MEN, was last reported on Mar 29 (BP), while another was seen close to shore in Monterey on April 10 (per MPRBA). Seawatching from Pigeon Point during April also recorded Black-footed Albatross on Apr 9 and Apr 23 (2 birds) (BM, PJM).

Another exciting report this month was of a **Dark-rumped Petrel** seen from a research vessel close to the Farallones, SF, towards the end of the March (LS). This follows a record from last fall at the Cordell Banks and potentially only the fifth US record if accepted by the CBRC. A **Manx Shearwater** was reported off Santa Cruz, with a large flock of approximately 5,000 Sooty Shearwaters on Apr 16 (BM). A few single Black-vented Shearwater were seen at Pigeon Point, during the month, while two Pink-footed Shearwater were seen from this location on Apr 4 (PJM).

A Snow Goose at Lake Merced, SF, from Apr 20 to 26 (KB) was interesting while the **Emperor Goose** at Bodega Bay, SON, remained at least through April 20 (AW). Duck highlights were non-existent, with most of our overwintering species having moved on and out of the area. Oldsquaw were reported in San Mateo (RST) and continuing in Monterey and Contra Costa (SG), while a single Eurasian Wigeon remained at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, and Redwood City, SM (RST).

Swainson's Hawks were noted throughout the month especially in the interior counties with good numbers of birds reported in San Benito, Alameda, and Contra Costa counties.

Pacific Golden Plovers were again found at Pigeon Point, including two birds on Apr 3 and singles on Apr 7 and 29 (PJM, RST). Solitary Sandpipers, typically scarce but regular in our area in Spring, were well represented with single birds in Corte Madera, MRN, on Apr 10 (NW) and at Palo Alto on Apr 21 (SR). Two were found near Madera, MAD, on Apr 23 (JS) with another two at the Colusa NWR, COL, on Apr 26/27 (LC). A Semipalmated Sandpiper, a scarce spring migrant, was at the Trestle Ponds in Yolo on Apr. 25 (SG), while Baird's Sandpiper turned up Apr 20 at the Santa Fe Grade, STA (AH), Apr 24 at the Redwood Shores, SM (RST), and at the Colusa NWR, COL, on Apr. 26 (LC). Another highlight this month was a mostly alternate plumaged **Curlew Sandpiper** at the Palo Alto Baylands, SCL, on April 17 (SR). This species is a very rare Spring vagrant to our area. A migrant Franklin's Gull was found at the Palo Alto Baylands on Apr 13 (MD), a breeding-plumaged adult. An immature bird was seen on the Duck Pond there on Apr 24 (BM). A Fork-tailed Storm Petrel was seen from Pigeon Point on April 4 (BM, RST), while also at Pigeon Point a Horned Puffin must have been an exciting flyby on Apr 10 (SG).

Flycatchers to Sparrows

Black-chinned Hummingbirds returned to their traditional locations such as Piper Slough, CC. Costa's Hummingbirds continued to be seen at Del Puerto Canyon Road, STA, throughout the month, while less typical was one present at a feeder in Contra Costa from Apr 13 to 23 (DW). Up to three pair of Cassin's Kingbirds were found to be nesting in San Benito County (SR), while additional birds were seen in Santa Clara and Stanislaus counties. This month saw the first reports of Hammond's and Willow Flycatchers of the Spring while more unusual was a Gray Flycatcher at Mitchell Canyon, Mount Diablo, CC, on Apr. 28 (FB). Notable warbler sightings were however pretty much non-existent this month. Reports of Nashville and Hermit Warblers continued while the first McGillivray's Warblers were noted on Mar 31 (BM) at Gazos Creek, SM, somewhat earlier than usual. A Palm Warbler at Point Reyes National Seashore, MRN, Apr 13 (RC) and another at Piper Slough, CC, on Apr. 26 (MH) were the only notable sightings of the month.

Sparrow reports include good numbers of Black-chinned and Rufous-crowned Sparrows at Mount Diablo and Del Puerto Canyon and other scattered locations. Great-tailed Grackle were found in Yosemite Valley, TUO, on Apr. 6 (SR) and at Stony Reservoir, MON, on Apr 26 (ST), with three birds at this latter location. A summer plumaged female Dickcissel was found at Pescadero, SM, on Apr 6 (PS) and remained at least through Apr 17, allowing many the opportunity of seeing this extremely rare spring visitor to our area. The female Rose-breasted Grosbeak in Half Moon Bay, SM, was last reported on Mar 30 (GD), while three Lark Buntings along Crabtree Road, STA, on Apr 27 were notable (HR).

Backyard Birder

by Meg Pauletich

By the time you read this there will be boundless baby birds, exhausted parents, and less frenzy in the air. Just now, however, my yard is teaming with activity since courting and nesting are well under way. Some juncoes must have decided not to travel too far to raise a family because they are zooming around with beaks full of dried grass. The Pine Siskins have also been late in migrating, hanging around the thistle sock and singing as they feed. As I stood at my sink, I was startled by a male House Finch's loud song. There he was, perched on a grapevine wreath (heart-shaped, no less) where he attempted to lure a mate. So far, no one has fallen for him despite his bright red head, beautiful singing, and romantic choice of a home. The male Anna's Hummingbird is trying to get some gal's eye as he swoops in big arcs. This will be his second family, at least, but he can afford the time because he leaves the child-rearing to his bride while he moves on!

One beautiful weekend in April we were in Monterey where our room on the bay overlooked a kelp bed with large lumps of otters. They were playing a game of tag with a bright pink piece of towel. There were Pigeon Guillemots, Herring Gulls, Thick-billed Murres, and even a Common Loon in "full dress." Along the walls of an abandoned warehouse was a colony of Pelagic Cormorants. Each pair seemed to be in a different stage of courting or nesting. Some were still trying to impress a prospective mate. Grabbing a huge mouthful of kelp, the bird would take off, fly low in a rather prescribed circular area at least twice before it landed on a girder and displayed the kelp to anyone looking its way, carefully posing with outstretched wings. Since the nests are built on mounds of kelp, this must be an important part of the courtship. Other birds were busy incubating their eggs, being fed by their mates. A few young were awaiting their meals as well. I felt like I was in a wildlife film!

At the end of my street is a colony of Acorn Woodpeckers. I'm supposed to walk after my back surgery (successful, thank goodness) so I check on them often. There has been a cacophony of drumming along with the usual loud conversations among the group. One day, things got very quiet among the woodpeckers. I then heard a Red-shouldered Hawk's scream. Suddenly six Acorn Woodpeckers flew from their "home tree" to the top of another where they set up a terrific racket. I can only surmise that they were trying to distract the predator from their little community. There's safety in numbers. Actually, the hawk has spent a lot of time this spring trying to attract a mate of its own – flapping above the valley, calling the whole time. So I'm sure that it wasn't very interested in the woodpeckers that day.

I hope that your spring has been as full of sights and song as mine has. It's all the sweeter this year because I'm free of pain! Celebrate the season!

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Contined from page 1

Adventures in Panama

only 15 feet from us on an open branch in a daze – a great view! After 2 nights at Cerro Pirre, we returned to Cana and spent a day and a half birding the trails there. It was a very special experience.

On Saturday we flew back to Panama City and spent the rest of the day and Sunday birding – from Summit Gardens to the Pacific shoreline to Cerro Azul, an area or "hill" south of Panama City. How many birds did we see? In 8 days we identified 332 species, many being "lifers" for most of us. They ranged from spectacular toucans, macaws, and trogons to 17 species of hummingbirds to a tiny, secretive 3 1/2 inch woodpecker, the Olivaceous Piculet. Its color and size may not have been spectacular compared with other birds we saw in Panama, like the Chestnut-mandibled Toucan, but it was so secretive that just finding it was a triumph!

We were invited to dinner Saturday evening at the home of the incoming PAS president, Javier Eskildsen and his wife, Aida. It was at a beautiful location high above the Pacific Ocean and Panama City, and the food was wonderful. It was another good opportunity to meet with the members of PAS, an interesting, highly committed, and enthusiastic group. We could not help but like them and want to do all in our power to assist with the daunting environmental problems they face.

Following that strenuous period, we all flew to the San Blas Islands for 2 days of relaxation. We snorkeled, relaxed in hammocks, and visited a Kuna Indian village. It was an exciting, varied, tiring trip, but well worth it. And everyone remained reasonably healthy!

Aren't you tempted?!

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